THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) A multi-disciplinary marketing cell has been set up to explore the possibilities of taking up third party jobs of maintenance and overhaul of air-frames, engines, etc. of domestic as well as international airlines.

Import of Fuel

*371. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Air India and Indian Airlines have been importing fuel;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the countries from where the fuel is being imported by the above airlines;

(d) whether the cost of imported fuel is less in comparison to its cost in the country;

(e) if so, the details thereof and estimated savings of AI and IA in importing the fuel;

(f) the steps taken to reduce fuel prices in the country;

(g) whether the directives of the Government regarding Station-wise fuel quota, prices and actual lifting are being complied with by Air India; and

(h) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (f) In 1995, Indian Airlines imported 32,600 kilolitres of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) through Indian Oil Corporation under Special Import Licence (SIL). The Company saved Rs. 17 crores due to price differential between the imported and domestic fuel. Subsequently due to imposition of surcharge and levying of customs duty on such imports, Indian Airlines discontinued the import of ATF. Air India does not import ATF but uplifts it from online stations wherever necessary.

The fuel prices in India are about 51% higher than the average fuel prices in the international market.

(g) and (h) No such directives have been issued by the Government.

Revision of Royalty Rates of Mineral

*372. SHRI CHANDUBHAI DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to set up a statutory body to revise the Royalty rates of minerals;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a decision was taken to revise the royalty rate of minerals in every three years;

(d) if so, the reasons for not revising the royalty rate of Lignite since 1990;

(e) whether the Government of Gujarat has represented to streamline the existing system of fixing the royalty rates of minerals departmentaly; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (f) As per the provisions of Section 9 of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 the Central Government may by notification in official Gazette, amend the Second Schedule to the Act, so as to enhance or reduce the rates at which royalty shall be payable in respect of major minerals with effect from such date as may be specified in the notification, but no enhancement in the rates of royalty in respect of such minerals can be made more than once during any period of three years.

The Central Government constituted a Study Group on 30.1.95 for carrying out detailed review of rates of royalty and dead rent applicable to major minerals (other than coal lignite and sand for stowing). The Study Group had members from some of the important mineral producing States including Gujarat. The Study Group also had consultation with the State Governments and the mining industry and considered the question of revision of rates of Royalty on major minerals and dead rent in all its aspects within the scope of its term of reference before submitting its report to the Government. The Study Group submitted its report in November, 1995. The report of the Study Group has been examined and the revision of rates is under consideration of the Government.

As regards lignite, action for review of royalty on lignite has been initiated by the Ministry of Coal.

[Translation]

Permission to Foreign Companies to Advertise their Products

*373. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :
SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have agreed to permit foreign companies to advertise their products on all channels of Doordarshan;

(b) if so, the details thereof and terms and conditions therefor;

(c) the estimated foreign exchange likely to be earned each year as a result thereof; and